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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Saudi Arabia

Structural Changes Being Considered

The US embassy in Saudi Arabia believes that a reorganization of Saudi provincial administration will get under way in July. It also seems likely that a consultative assembly will be established in the not too distant future. These two changes in government structure were proposed in a major policy speech delivered by Crown Prince Fahd in early April, shortly after Faysal's assassination.

The reform of provincial government has been contemplated since October 1963, when detailed provincial regulations were approved by the king, but never implemented. The embassy anticipates that next month the country's many "minor" emirates will be aggregated into five provinces that will take their place alongside eight existing "major" provinces. Accompanying reforms will enable provincial government to carry out tasks now performed in Riyadh by central government authorities, thus speeding up administrative decisions. The reorganization plan also calls for the creation of local councils in each province, to be made up of representatives of ministries functioning in the province as well as local notables appointed by the governor.

The embassy believes the changes will lead to a less personally-oriented system of rule and to greater uniformity in administrative decision across the country. The embassy does not expect that they will weaken the central government or greatly enhance the power of the governors.

Prince Fahd has been advocating a consultative assembly since the late 1960s, when he was trying to broaden his political base and establish a reputation as the royal family's modernizer. About a year before Faysal's assassination, he reiterated to the US ambassador his determination to push for domestic reforms.

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Conservatives in the royal family may try to stall an assembly, seeing in it dangers to family hegemony. If the idea of an assembly gets off the ground, Fahd will be under pressure from traditional elites to give them a share of seats. If able modernists are appointed, they will almost certainly seek to enlarge their role in the governmental process.

The US embassy has indicated that--as of early June--the Saudis are still wrestling with such questions as what kinds of issues an assembly should be empowered to discuss, whether it should have the authority to initiate matters, and what weight the government should give to the assembly's recommendations. The embassy believes that Fahd's assembly may be somehow grafted onto an existing, but largely moribund institution, founded in 1926 and based in Mecca. It has rarely been consulted by Saudi kings and deals largely with issues of the Hejaz region.

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Kenya

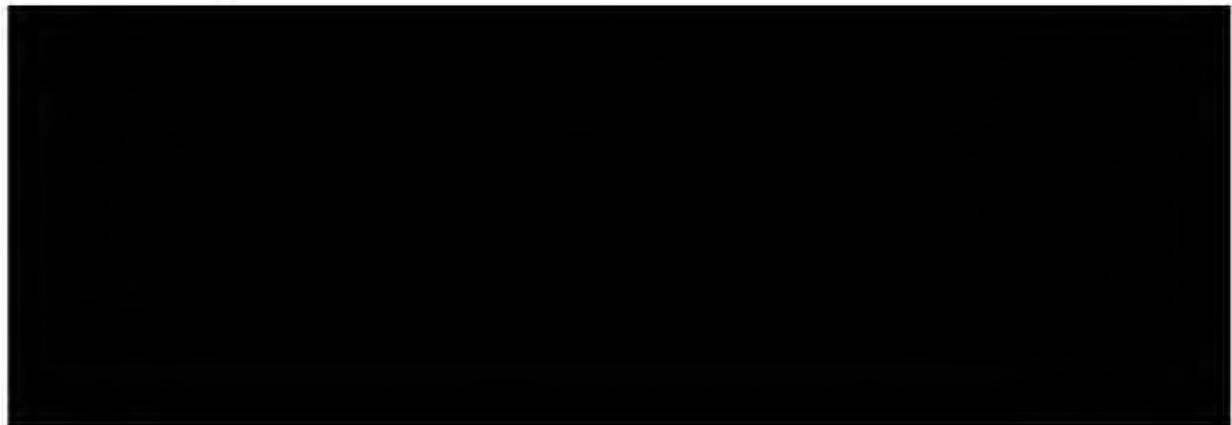
Uneasy Stalemate

Kenya appears to be in for an extended period of tension. President Kenyatta, whose popularity and credibility has been eroding for some time, is now facing an increasingly rebellious parliament and is even having problems with some members of his cabinet. Fear of Kenyatta may deter his critics from challenging him directly, however.

The presentation to parliament earlier this month of the report of the select committee investigating the Kariuki murder and the government's handling of the case led to several days of heated debate. The committee report:

- Named three persons as the probable triggermen.
- Condemned the police for noncooperation with the committee.
- Claimed the police investigation had been neither thorough nor genuine, and that the police knew the identity of the criminals.
- Called for the ouster of the commander of the paramilitary police and three other high ranking police officers.

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In Parliament, a government effort to delay debate on the committee report was defeated on June 4. A week later, another government motion, which would have vitiated the impact of the report, was also rejected. On both occasions, only 59 legislators voted with the government despite pressure from Kenyatta. Sixty-two voted with the opposition, and over 40 absented themselves.

Three cabinet members were among those who defied Kenyatta and voted against the government motion; three others were absent. The six defecting cabinet members all had personal ties to either Kariuki or Tom Mboya, a prominent politician who was murdered in 1969. As opponents of political domination by Kenyatta's southern branch of the Kikuyu tribe, they may have felt that now was the time to put some distance between them and the President. Kenyatta immediately fined the three ministers who voted with the opposition.

Kenyatta is unlikely to take any action against the police officials or others named in the committee report. The government is reported, however, to be planning a judicial inquiry into the Kariuki murder in order to demonstrate that it is not ignoring the report. The tactic is unlikely to restore public confidence.

Although Kenyatta's opponents are becoming bolder, they are well aware that they are no match for him as long as he retains control of the civil service, the police, and the armed forces. Moreover, the critics, in varying degrees, have a stake in preserving Kenya's prosperity and its still largely functioning democratic institutions. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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Pakistan-Afghanistan

*Afghan Troop Movements a Response to
Tribal Clashes in Pakistan*

Clashes between Pakistani military units and tribesmen in a sensitive border area near Afghanistan apparently were the cause of Afghan troop movements toward the border earlier this month. The Pakistani forces were trying to protect road construction crews from armed attacks by tribesmen who oppose road-building and other government programs designed to strengthen Islamabad's control in the area.

Pakistan's remote border tribal areas have long enjoyed a considerable degree of de facto autonomy from Islamabad. The Afghans, who are ethnically related to the tribesmen, have supported the efforts of the tribesmen to maintain and increase their autonomy. Afghan President Daoud's dispatch of troops to the border area was apparently intended to demonstrate solidarity with the tribesmen as well as to counter what Daoud believed was a Pakistani troop buildup in the area. We have no evidence that any substantial Pakistani buildup has occurred, although some regular army troops may have been brought in to help militia forces protect the road builders from the tribesmen.

Daoud is not likely to order his men to take action against Pakistan's superior army, but the danger of cross-border incidents will increase if Islamabad responds to the recent Afghan moves by sending reinforcements of its own to the area.

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